

February 28, 2021

RE: House Bill 6517

My name is Pamela Stone-Shaw, I live in Newtown, CT. I am writing to express my support of house bill 6517.

Having a child who has struggled with reading and who has been diagnosed with dyslexia has given me firsthand knowledge of the difficulties children with dyslexia face in the public school system. My daughter started receiving general reading support in kindergarten, we realized she needed more intense support starting in first grade when she struggled reading the most basic words and every word she wrote was misspelled.

When I initially brought my concerns up with the school system, they did some basic test after I requested testing and they determined they would increase her reading support but her reading skills were not improving at a pace I felt they should. Having several close family members with dyslexia gave me the ability to see this was more than a general reading deficit that could be corrected with the reading support the school was offering.

I ended up getting my daughter tested outside of the school system with an educational psychologist and she was diagnosed with dyslexia. At this point the school refused to give the correct reading support for dyslexia. We hired an advocate which helped us fight for my daughters right for the proper reading program and after much stress, emotion and suffering, we were able to get the correct reading support for her. This support was finally implemented at the end of second grade.

My daughter is currently in her third year of receiving instruction using an evidence-based reading program (Wilson's) and she is reading very well and recently tested at almost the 70<sup>th</sup> % in reading on the NWEA. I am so grateful she has received the proper instruction, but I am sad to say, she would not have received this if we did not fight for it.

I think of the large percentage of children that are not being identified and then not getting the instruction they need to succeed in reading. Reading has an impact on many facets of life. Please support every child's right to receive structured literacy.

Thank you,

Pamela Stone-Shaw